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Moores Fables for the female sex

Edward Moore, Henry Brooke

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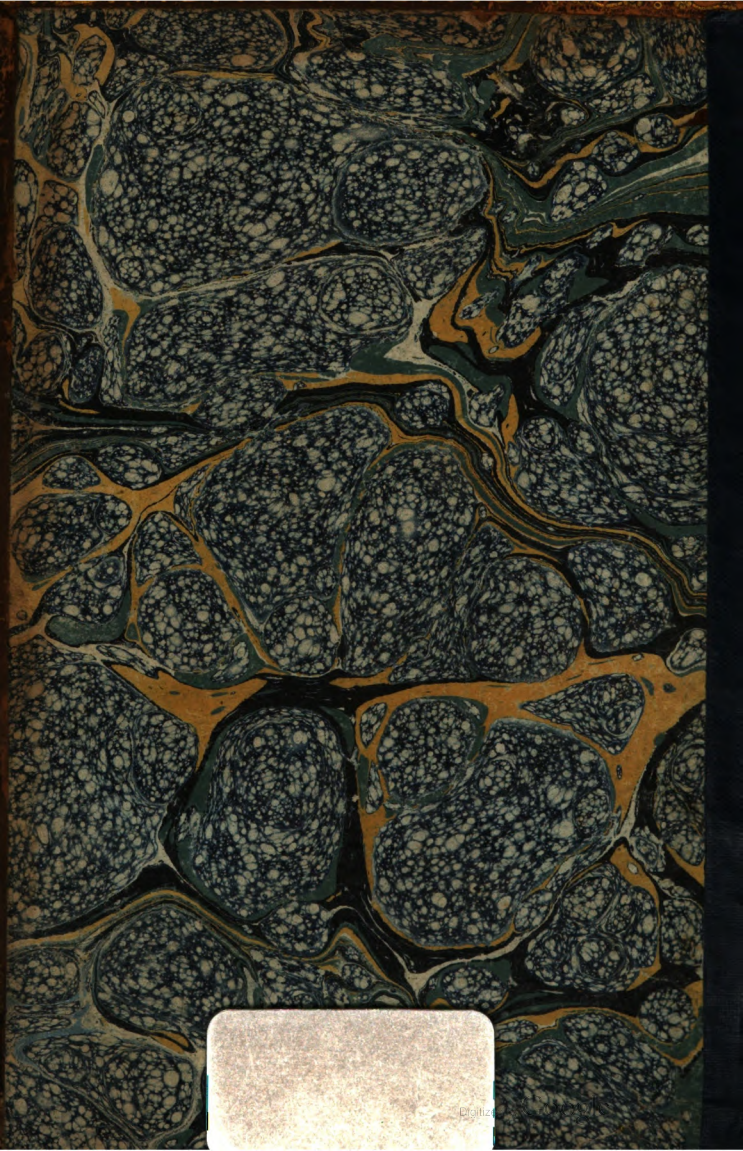

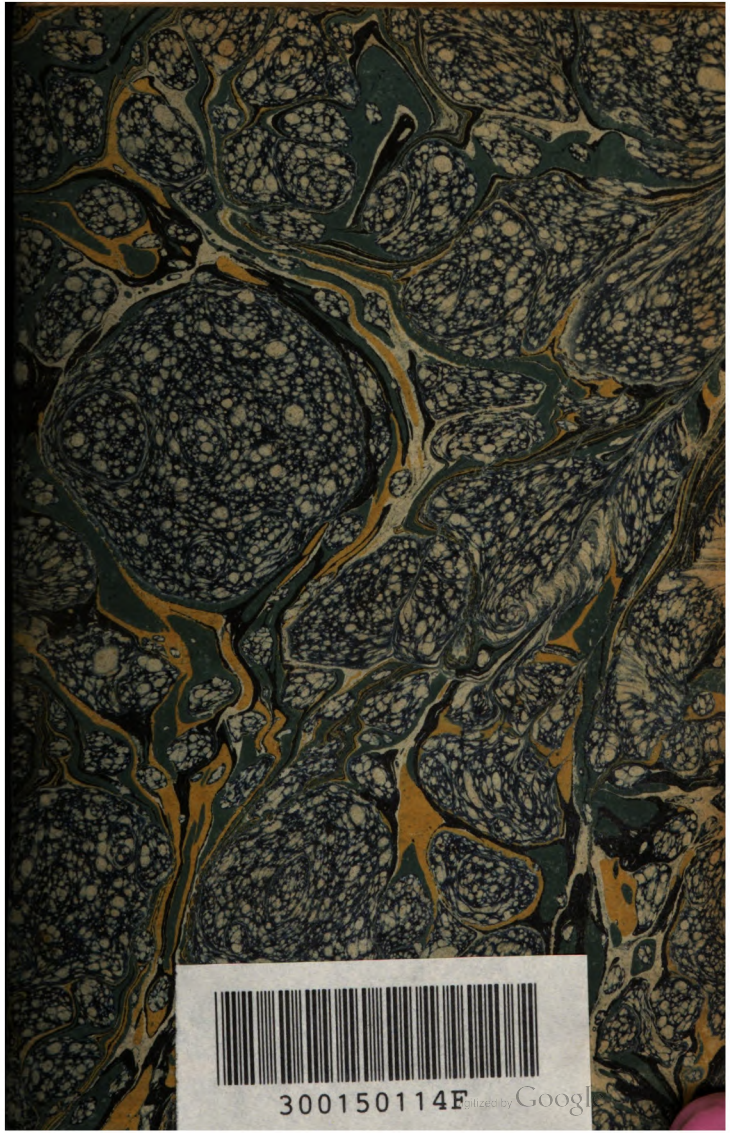
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Stories & Fables
for
The Female Sex
Embellished with Engravings

"Ye wretches, hence the Eagle cries."
Pope.

London,

Printed for Scatchard & Letterman, Ave Maria Lane;
Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme,
and H.D. Symonds, Paternoster Row.
1806.

(Printed by C. Whittingham)

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FABLES

FOR

THE FEMALE SEX.

FABLE I.

THE EAGLE AND THE ASSEMBLY OF BIRDS.

To her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.

THE moral lay, to beauty due,
I write, FAIR EXCELLENCE, to you;
Well pleas'd to hope my vacant hours
Have been employ'd to sweeten your's.
Truth under fiction I impart,
To weed out folly from the heart,

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And shew the paths that lead astray
The wand'ring nymph from wisdom's way.

I flatter none. The great and good
Are by their actions understood;
Your monument if actions raise,
Shall I deface by idle praise?
I echo not the voice of Fame;
That dwells delighted on your name:
Her friendly tale, however true,
Were flatt'ry, if I told it you.

The proud, the envious, and the vain,
The jilt, the prude, demand my strain;
To these, detesting praise, I write,
And vent in charity my spite:
With friendly hand I hold the glass
To all, promiscuous, as they pass:
Should folly there her likeness view,
I fret not that the mirror's true;
If the fantastic form offend,
I made it not, but would amend.

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With friendly hand I hold the glass
To all promiscuous, as they pass;

Exc. 3.

London: Published May 1st 1799. by T. Heptinstall N.o 304 High Holborn.

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Virtue, in ev'ry clime and age,
Spurns at the folly-soothing page;
While satire, that offends the ear
Of vice and passion, pleases her.

Premising this, your anger spare;
And claim the fable you who dare.

The BIRDS in place, by faction press'd,
To JUPITER their pray'rs address'd;
By specious lies the state was vex'd,
Their counsels libellers perplex'd;
They begg'd (to stop seditious tongues)
A gracious hearing of their wrongs.
JOVE grants their suit. The EAGLE sate,
Decider of the grand debate.

The PYE, to trust and pow'r preferr'd,
Demands permission to be heard.
Says he, 'Prolixity of phrase
'You know I hate. This libel says,

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" Some birds there are, who, prone to noise,
" Are hir'd to silence WISDOM'S voice;
" And, skill'd to chatter out the hour,
" Rise by their emptiness to pow'r."
' That this is aim'd direct at me,
' No doubt, you'll readily agree:
' Yet well this sage assembly knows,
' By parts to government I rose;
' My prudent counsels prop the state;
' MAGPIES were never known to prate.'

The KITE rose up. His honest heart
In VIRTUE'S suff'rings bore a part.
That there were birds of prey he knew;
So far the libeller said true,
" Voracious, bold, to rapine prone,
" Who knew no int'rest but their own;
" Who, hov'ring o'er the farmer's yard,
" Nor pigeon, chick, nor duckling spar'd."
This might be true—but if apply'd
To him, in troth, the sland'rer ly'd.
Since IGN'RANCE then might be misled,
Such things, he thought, were best unsaid.

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The CROW was vext. As yester-morn
He flew across the new-sown corn,
A screaming boy was set for pay,
He knew, to drive the CROWS away:
SCANDAL had found him out in turn,
And buzz'd abroad—that CROWS love corn.

The OWL arose, with solemn face,
And thus harangu'd upon the case:
'That MAGPIES prate, it may be true;
'A KITE may be voracious too;
'CROWS sometimes deal in new-sown pease;
'He libels not, who strikes at these;
'The slander's here—" But there are birds,
" Whose wisdom lies in looks, not words;
" Blund'rers who level in the dark,
" And always shoot beside the mark."
'He names not me; but these are hints
'Which manifest at whom he squints;
'I were indeed that blund'ring fowl,
'To question if he meant an OWL.'

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" Ye wretches, hence!" the EAGLE cries,
" 'Tis conscience, conscience that applies;
" The virtuous mind takes no alarm,
" Secur'd by innocence from harm;
" While GUILT, and his associate, FEAR,
" Are startled at the passing air."

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FABLE II.

THE PANTHER, HORSE, AND OTHER BEASTS.

THE man who seeks to win the fair,
(So custom says) must truth forbear;
Must fawn and flatter, cringe and lie,
And raise the goddess to the sky;
For truth is hateful to her ear,
A rudeness which she cannot bear—
A rudeness?—Yes,—I speak my thoughts,
For truth upbraids her with her faults.

How wretched, CHLOE, then am I,
Who love you, and yet cannot lie;
And still, to make you less my friend,
I strive your errors to amend!
But shall the senseless fop impart
The softest passion to your heart,

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While he who tells you honest truth,
And points to happiness your youth,
Determines, by his cares, his lot,
And lives neglected and forgot?

Trust me, my dear, with greater ease,
Your taste for flatt'ry I could please.
And similes in each dull line,
Like glow-worms in the dark, should shine.
What if I say your lips disclose
The freshness of the op'ning rose?
Or that your cheeks are beds of flow'rs,
Enripen'd by refreshing show'rs?
Yet certain as these flow'rs shall fade,
Time ev'ry beauty will invade.
The BUTTERFLY of various hue,
More than the flow'r, resembles you:
Fair, flutt'ring, fickle, busy thing,
To pleasure ever on the wing,
Gayly coquetting for an hour,
To die, and ne'er be thought of more.

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Would you the bloom of youth should last?
'Tis virtue that must bind it fast;
An easy carriage, wholly free
From sour reserve, or levity;
Good-natur'd mirth, an open heart,
And looks unskill'd in any art;
Humility, enough to own
The frailties which a friend makes known;
And decent pride, enough to know
The worth that virtue can bestow.

These are the charms which ne'er decay,
Tho' youth and beauty fade away;
And time, which all things else removes,
Still heightens virtue and improves.

You'll frown, and ask to what intent
This blunt address to you is sent;
I'll spare the question, and confess
I'd praise you, if I lov'd you less;
But rail, be angry, or complain,
I will be rude, while you are vain.

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Beneath a LION's peaceful reign,
When beasts met friendly on the plain,
A PANTHER, of majestic port,
(The vainest female of the court)
With spotted skin, and eyes of fire,
Fill'd ev'ry bosom with desire;
Where'er she mov'd, a servile crowd
Of fawning creatures cring'd and bow'd;
Assemblies ev'ry week she held,
(Like modern belles) with coxcombs fill'd,
Where noise and nonsense, and grimace,
And lies and scandal, fill'd the place.

Behold the gay, fantastic thing,
Encircled by the spacious ring;
Low-bowing, with important look,
As first in rank, the MONKEY spoke:

" Gad take me, madam! but I swear
" No angel ever look'd so fair——
" Forgive my rudeness, but, I vow,
" You were not quite divine till now;

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" Those limbs! that shape! and then those eyes,
" O close them, or the gazer dies!"

' Nay, gentle PUG, for goodness hush,
' I vow and swear you make me blush;
' I shall be angry at this rate——
' 'Tis so like flatt'ry, which I hate.'

The FOX, in deeper cunning vers'd,
The beauties of her mind rehears'd,
And talk'd of knowledge, taste, and sense,
To which the fair have most pretence;
Yet well he knew them always vain
Of what they strive not to attain,
And play'd so cunningly his part,
That PUG was rival'd in his art.

The GOAT avow'd his am'rous flame,
And burnt—for what he durst not name;
Yet hop'd a meeting in the wood
Might make his meaning understood.

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Half angry at the bold address,
She frown'd; but yet she must confess,
Such beauties might inflame his blood;
But still his phrase was somewhat rude.

The HOG her neatness much admir'd;
The formal ASS her swiftness fir'd;
While all to feed her folly strove,
And by their praises shar'd her love.

The HORSE, whose gen'rous heart disdain'd
Applause by servile flatt'ry gain'd,
With graceful courage silence broke,
And thus with indignation spoke:

" When flatt'ring MONKEYS fawn and prate,
" They justly raise contempt, or hate;
" For merit's turn'd to ridicule,
" Applauded by the grinning fool.
" The artful FOX your wit commends,
" To lure you to his selfish ends;

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'From public view her charms will screen
And rarely in the crowd be seen'

Page 12.

London: Published by Scatchard & Letterman, Ave Maria Lane.

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" From the vile flatt'rer turn away,
" For knaves make friendship to betray.
" Dismiss the train of fops and fools,
" And learn to live by wisdom's rules.
" Such beauties might the LION warm,
" Did not your folly break the charm;
" For who would court that lovely shape,
" To be the rival of an APE?"
He said; and snorting in disdain,
Spurn'd at the crowd, and sought the plain.

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FABLE III.

THE NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM.

THE prudent nymph, whose cheeks disclose
The lily and the blushing rose,
From public view her charms will skreen,
And rarely in the crowd be seen:
This simple truth shall keep her wise,
" The fairest fruits attract the flies."

One night a GLOW-WORM, proud and vain,
Contemplating her glitt'ring train,
Cry'd sure there never was in nature,
So elegant, so fine a creature;
All other insects that I see,
The frugal ANT, industrious BEE,

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Or SILK-WORM, with contempt I view;
With all that low, mechanic crew,
Who servilely their lives employ
In business, enemy to joy.
Mean, vulgar herd! ye are my scorn,
For grandeur only I was born;
Or sure am sprung from race divine,
And plac'd on earth to live and shine.
Those lights, that sparkle so on high,
Are but the GLOW-WORMS of the sky;
And kings on earth their gems admire,
Because they imitate my fire.

She spoke. Attentive on a spray,
A NIGHTINGALE forbore his lay;
He saw the shining morsel near,
And flew, directed by the glare;
Awhile he gaz'd with sober look,
And thus the trembling prey bespoke:

Deluded fool, with pride elate,
Know, 'tis thy beauty brings thy fate;

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Less dazzling, long thou might'st have lain,
Unheeded on the velvet plain;
Pride, soon or late, degraded mourns,
And beauty wrecks whom she adorns.

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FABLE IV.

HYMEN AND DEATH.

SIXTEEN, d'ye say? Nay, then 'tis time;
Another year destroys your prime.
But stay—The settlement? "That's made."
Why then's my simple girl afraid?
Yet hold a moment, if you can,
And heedfully the fable scan.

The shades were fled, the morning blush'd,
The winds were in their caverns hush'd,
When HYMEN, pensive and sedate,
Held o'er the fields his musing gait,
Behind him, thro' the green-wood shade,
DEATH'S meagre form the GOD survey'd,
Who quickly with gigantic stride,
Out-went his pace, and join'd his side.

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The chat on various subjects ran,
Till angry HYMEN thus began:

" Relentless DEATH, whose iron sway
" Mortals reluctant must obey,
" Still of thy pow'r shall I complain,
" And thy too partial hand arraign?
" When CUPID brings a pair of hearts,
" All over struck with equal darts,
" Thy cruel shafts my hopes deride,
" And cut the knot that HYMEN ty'd.

" Shall not the bloody, and the bold,
" The miser, hoarding up his gold,
" The harlot, reeking from the stew,
" Alone thy fell revenge pursue?
" But must the gentle, and the kind,
" Thy fury, undistinguish'd find?"

The monarch calmly thus reply'd:
" Weigh well the cause, and then decide.

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'That friend of your's, you lately nam'd,
'CUPID, alone, is to be blam'd;
'Then let the charge be justly laid;
'That idle boy neglects his trade,
'And hardly once in twenty years
'A couple to your temple bears.
'The wretches, whom your office blends,
'SILENUS now, or PLUTUS sends;
'Hence care, and bitterness, and strife,
'Are common to the nuptial life.

'Believe me; more than all mankind,
'Your vot'ries my compassion find.
'Yet cruel am I call'd, and base,
'Who seek the wretched to release;
'The captive from his bonds to free,
'Indissoluble, but for me.

''Tis I entice him to the yoke;
'By me your crowded altars smoke;
'For mortals boldly dare the noose,
'Secure, that DEATH will set them loose.'

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FABLE V.

THE POET AND HIS PATRON.

WHY, CELIA, is your spreading waist
So loose, so negligently lac'd?
Why must the wrapping bed-gown hide
Your snowy bosom's swelling pride?
How ill that dress adorns your head,
Disdain'd and rumpled from the bed!
Those clouds, that shade your blooming face,
A little water might displace,
As NATURE every morn bestows
The crystal dew to cleanse the rose.
Those tresses, as the raven black,
That wav'd in ringlets down your back,
Uncomb'd, and injur'd by neglect,
Destroy the face which once they deck'd.

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Whence this forgetfulness of dress!
Pray, madam, are you married? Yes.
Nay! then indeed the wonder ceases,
No matter now how loose your dress is;
The end is won, your fortune's made,
Your sister now may take the trade.

Alas! what pity 'tis to find
This fault in half the female kind!
From hence proceed aversion, strife,
And all that sours the wedded life.
BEAUTY can only point the dart,
'Tis NEATNESS guides it to the heart;
Let NEATNESS then, and BEAUTY strive
To keep a wav'ring flame alive.

'Tis harder far (you'll find it true)
To keep the conquest than subdue;
Admit us once behind the screen,
What is there farther to be seen?
A newer face may raise the flame,
But ev'ry woman is the same.

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Then study chiefly to improve
The charm that fix'd your husband's love;
Weigh well his humour. Was it dress
That gave your beauty pow'r to bless?
Pursue it still; be neater seen,
'Tis always frugal to be clean;
So shall you keep alive desire,
And TIME's swift wing shall fan the fire.

In garret high (as stories say)
A POET sung his tuneful lay;
So soft, so smooth his verse, you'd swear
APOLLO and the MUSES there;
Through all the town his praises rung,
His sonnets at the playhouse sung;
High waving o'er his lab'ring head,
The goddess WANT her pinions spread,
And with poetic fury fir'd,
What PHŒBUS faintly had inspir'd.

A noble youth, of taste and wit,
Approv'd the sprightly things he writ,

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And sought him in his cobweb dome,
Discharg'd his rent, and brought him home.

Behold him at the stately board,
Who but the POET and my LORD!
Each day deliciously he dines,
And greedy quaffs the gen'rous wines;
His sides were plump, his skin was sleek,
And PLENTY wanton'd on his cheek;
Astonish'd at the change so new,
Away th' inspiring goddess flew.

Now, dropt for politics and news,
Neglected lay the drooping MUSE,
Unmindful whence his fortune came,
He stifled the poetic flame;
Nor tale nor sonnet, for my lady,
Lampoon, nor epigram was ready.

With just contempt his PATRON saw,
(Resolv'd his bounty to withdraw)

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And thus, with anger in his look,
The late-repenting fool bespoke:—

" Blind to the good that courts thee grown,
" Whence has the sun of favour shone?
" Delighted with thy tuneful art,
" Esteem was growing in my heart,
" But idly thou reject'st the charm
" That gave it birth, and kept it warm.
" Unthinking fools alone despise
" The arts that taught them first to rise.'

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FABLE VI.

THE WOLF, THE SHEEP, AND THE LAMB.

DUTY demands the parent's voice
Should sanctify the daughter's choice;
In that is due obedience shewn;
To choose belongs to her alone.

May horror seize his midnight hour
Who builds upon a parent's pow'r,
And claims, by purchase vile and base,
The loathing maid for his embrace;
Hence virtue sickens, and the breast,
Where peace had built her downy nest,
Becomes the troubled seat of care,
And pines with anguish and despair.

A WOLF, rapacious, rough, and bold,
Whose nightly plunders thinn'd the fold,

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Contemplating his ill-spent life,
And cloy'd with thefts, would take a wife.
His purpose known, the savage race
In num'rous crouds attend the place;
For why, a mighty WOLF he was,
And held dominion in his jaws.
Her fav'rite whelp each mother brought,
And humbly his alliance sought;
But cold by age, or else too nice,
None found acceptance in his eyes.]

It happen'd, as at early dawn,
He, solitary, cross'd the lawn;
Stray'd from the fold, a sportive LAMB
Skip'd wanton by her fleecy DAM;
When CUPID, foe to man and beast,
Discharg'd an arrow at his breast.
The tim'rous breed the robber knew,
And trembling o'er the meadow flew;
Their nimblest speed the WOLF o'ertook,
And, courteous, thus the DAM bespoke:

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Stay, fairest, and suspend your fear,
Trust me, no enemy is near;
These jaws, in slaughter oft imbru'd,
At length have known enough of blood,
And kinder business brings me now,
Vanquish'd, at beauty's feet to bow.
You have a daughter—Sweet, forgive
A WOLF's address—In her I live;
Love from her eye like lightning came,
And set my marrow all on flame;
Let your consent confirm my choice,
And ratify our nuptial joys.
Me ample wealth and pow'r attend,
Wide o'er the plains my realms extend;
What midnight robber dare invade
The fold, if I the guard am made?
At home the shepherd's cur may sleep,
While I secure his master's sheep.
Discourse like his attention claim'd;
Grandeur the MOTHER's breast inflam'd;
Now fearless by his side she walk'd,
Of settlements and jointures talk'd;

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Propos'd and doubled her demands,
Of flow'ry fields and turnip lands.
The WOLF agrees.—Her bosom swells;
To MISS her happy fate she tells;
And, of the grand alliance vain,
Contemns her kindred of the plain.

The loathing LAMB with horror hears,
And wearies out her DAM with pray'rs,
But all in vain; mamma best knew
What unexperienc'd girls should do:
So, to a neighb'ring meadow carry'd,
A formal ass the couple marry'd.

Torn from the tyrant-mother's side,
The trembler goes, a victim-bride;
Reluctant meets the rude embrace,
And bleats among the howling race.
With horror oft her eyes behold
Her murder'd kindred of the fold;
Each day a sister-lamb is serv'd,
And at the glutton's table carv'd;

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The crashing bones he grinds for food,
And slakes his thirst with streaming blood.

Love, who the cruel mind detests,
And lodges but in gentle breasts,
Was now no more.—Enjoyment past,
The savage hunger'd for the feast;
But (as we find in human race,
A mask conceals the villain's face)
Justice must authorize the treat:
Till then he long'd, but durst not eat.

As forth he walk'd, in quest of prey,
The hunters met him on the way;
Fear wings his flight; the marsh he sought,
The snuffing dogs are set at fault.
His stomach baulk'd, now hunger gnaws,
Howling he grinds his empty jaws;
Food must be had—and lamb is nigh;
His maw invokes the fraudful lie.
Is this, dissembling rage, he cry'd,
The gentle virtue of a bride?

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That, leagu'd with man's destroying race,
She sets her husband for the chase?
By treach'ry prompts the noisy hound
To scent his footsteps o'er the ground?
Thou trait'ress vile, for this thy blood
Shall glut my rage, and dye the wood!

So saying, on the LAMB he flies:
Beneath his jaws the victim dies.

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FABLE VII.

THE GOOSE AND THE SWANS.

I HATE the face, however fair,
That carries an affected air;
The lisping tone, the shape constrain'd,
The study'd look, the passion feign'd,
Are fopperies, which only tend
To injure what they strive to mend.
With what superior grace enchants
The face which NATURE's pencil paints!
Where eyes, unexercis'd in art,
Glow with the meaning of the heart!
Where FREEDOM and GOOD-HUMOUR sit,
And easy GAIETY and WIT!
Though perfect BEAUTY be not there,
The master lines, the finish'd air,

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We catch from every look delight,
And grow enamour'd at the sight;
For beauty, though we all approve,
Excites our wonder more than love;
While the agreeable strikes sure,
And gives the wounds we cannot cure.

Why then, my AMORET, this care,
That forms you, in effect, less fair?
If NATURE on your cheek bestows
A bloom that emulates the rose,
Or from some heav'nly image drew
A form APELLES never knew,
Your ill-judg'd aid will you impart,
And spoil by meretricious art?
Or had you, NATURE's error, come
Abortive from the mother's womb,
Your forming care she still rejects,
Which only heightens her defects.
When such, of glitt'ring jewels proud,
Still press the foremost in the crowd,

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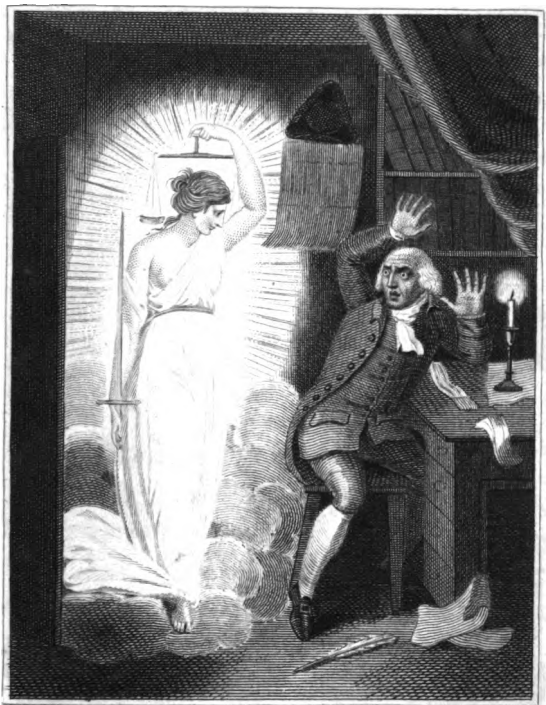

White del. Rothwell sculp.

The wretch with thrilling horror shook,
Loose every joint, and pale his look.

Page 32.

London: Published by Scatchard & Letterman, Ave Maria Lane.

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At every public shew are seen,
With look awry, and aukward mien,
The gaudy dress attracts the eye,
And magnifies deformity.

NATURE may underdo her part,
But seldom wants the help of ART;
Trust her, she is your surest friend,
Nor made your form for you to mend.

A GOOSE, affected, empty, vain,
The shrillest of the cackling train,
With proud and elevated crest,
Precedence claim'd above the rest.
Says she, I laugh at human race,
Who say, geese hobble in their pace;
Look here!—the sland'rous lie detect;
Not haughty man is so erect.
That PEACOCK yonder, lord, how vain
The creature's of his gaudy train!
If both were stript, I'd pawn my word,
A GOOSE would be the finer bird.

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NATURE, to hide her own defects,
Her bungled work with fin'ry decks;
Were GEESE set off with half that show,
Would men admire the PEACOCK? No.

Thus vaunting, 'cross the mead she stalks,
The cackling breed attend her walks.
The SUN shot down his noontide beams,
The SWANS were sporting in the streams;
Their snowy plumes, and stately pride,
Provoke her spleen. Why, there, she cry'd,
Again what arrogance we see!
Those creatures! how they mimic me!
Shall ev'ry fowl the waters skim,
Because we GEESE are known to swim?
Humility they soon shall learn,
And their own emptiness discern.

So saying, with extended wings,
Lightly upon the wave she springs;
Her bosom swells, she spreads her plumes,
And the SWAN'S stately crest assumes.

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Contempt and mockery ensu'd,
And bursts of laughter shook the flood.

A SWAN, superior to the rest,
Sprung forth, and thus the fool address'd:
Conceited thing! elate with pride,
Thy affectation all deride;
These airs thy aukwardness impart,
And shew thee plainly as thou art.
Among thy equals of the flock,
Thou hadst escap'd the public mock.
And, as thy parts to good conduce,
Been deem'd an honest hobbling GOOSE.

Learn hence to study WISDOM's rules;
Know, foppery's the pride of fools;
And striving NATURE to conceal,
You only her defects reveal.

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FABLE VIII.

THE LAWYER AND JUSTICE.

Love; thou divinest good below,
Thy pure delights few mortals know:
Our rebel hearts thy sway disown,
While tyrant LUST usurps thy throne!
The bounteous GOD OF NATURE made
The sexes for each other's aid,
Their mutual talents to employ,
To lessen ills, and heighten joy.
To weaker woman he assign'd
That soft'ning gentleness of mind,
That can by sympathy impart
Its likeness to the roughest heart.
Her eyes with magic pow'r endu'd,
To fire the dull, and awe the rude.

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His rosy fingers on her face
Shed lavish ev'ry blooming grace,
And stamp'd (perfection to display)
His mildest image on her clay.

Man, active, resolute, and bold,
He fashion'd in a diff'rent mould;
With useful arts his mind inform'd,
His breast with nobler passions warm'd;
He gave him knowledge, taste, and sense,
And courage for the fair's defence.
Her frame, resistless to each wrong,
Demands protection from the strong;
To man she flies, when fear alarms,
And claims the temple of his arms.

By nature's author thus declar'd
The woman's sov'reign and her guard:
Shall man, by treach'rous wiles invade
The weakness he was meant to aid?
While beauty, given to inspire
Protecting love and soft desire,

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Lights up a wild-fire in the heart,
And to its own breast points the dart,
Becomes the spoiler's base pretence
To triumph over innocence!

The wolf, that tears the tim'rous sheep,
Was never set the fold to keep;
Nor was the tiger, or the pard,
Meant the benighted trav'ller's guard:
But man, the wildest beast of prey,
Wears friendship's semblance to betray;
His strength against the weak employs,
And where he should protect, destroys.

Past twelve o'clock, the watchman cry'd,
His brief the studious LAWYER ply'd;
The all-prevailing fee lay nigh,
The earnest of to-morrow's lie;
Sudden the furious winds arise,
The jarring casement shatter'd flies;
The doors admit a hollow sound,
And rattling from their hinges bound;

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When JUSTICE, in a blaze of light,
Reveal'd her radiant form to sight.

The wretch with thrilling horror shook,
Loose ev'ry joint, and pale his look,
Not having seen her in the courts,
Or found her mentioned in reports,
He ask'd, with falt'ring tongue, her name,
Her errand there, and whence she came?

Sternly the white-rob'd shade reply'd,
(A crimson glow her visage dy'd)
Canst thou be doubtful who I am?
Is JUSTICE grown so strange a name?
Were not your courts for JUSTICE rais'd?
'Twas there of old my altars blaz'd.
My guardian thee did I elect,
My sacred temple to protect;
That thou, and all thy venal tribe,
Should spurn the goddess for a bribe!
Aloud the ruin'd client cries,
JUSTICE has neither ears nor eyes!

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In foul alliance with the bar,
'Gainst me the judge denounces war,
And rarely issues his decree,
But with intent to baffle me.

She paus'd. Her breast with fury burn'd;
The trembling LAWYER thus return'd:
I own the charge is justly laid,
And weak th' excuse that can be made;
Yet search the spacious globe, and see
If all mankind are not like me.
The GOWN-MAN, skill'd in ROMISH lies,
By FAITH's false glass deludes our eyes;
O'er conscience rides without controul,
And robs the man, to save his soul.

The DOCTOR, with important face,
By sly design mistakes the case;
Prescribes, and spins out the disease,
To trick the patient of his fees.—
The SOLDIER, rough with many a scar,
And red with slaughter, leads the war;

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White del.ᵗ W.Taylor sculp.ᵗ

The maid who modestly conceals
Her beauties, whil'e she hides, reveals;
page 41

London Published June 24ᵗʰ 1799 by T.Hoptinstall Holborn

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If he a nation's trust betray,
The foe has offer'd double pay.

When vice o'er all mankind prevails,
And weighty int'rest turns the scales,
Must I be better than the rest,
And harbour JUSTICE in my breast?
On one side only take the fee,
Content with poverty and thee?

Thou blind to sense, and vile of mind,
Th' exasperated shade rejoin'd,
If virtue from the world is flown,
Will others faults excuse thy own?
For sickly souls the priest was made;
PHYSICIANS for the body's aid;
The SOLDIER guarded liberty;
Man, woman, and the LAWYER me:
If all are faithless to their trust,
They leave not thee the less unjust.
Henceforth your pleadings I disclaim,
And bar the sanction of my name;

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Within your courts it shall be read,
That JUSTICE from the law is fled.

She spoke; and hid in shades her face,
'Till HARDWICK sooth'd her into grace.

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FABLE IX.

THE FARMER, THE SPANIEL, AND THE CAT.

WHY knits my dear her angry brow?
What rude offence alarms you now?
I said, that DELIA'S fair; 'tis true,
But did I say she equall'd you?
Can't I another's face commend,
Or to her virtues be a friend,
But instantly your forehead lours,
As if her merit lessen'd your's?
From female envy never free,
All must be blind, because you see.

Survey the gardens, fields, and bow'rs,
The buds, the blossoms, and the flow'rs,
Then tell me where the woodbine grows
That vies in sweetness with the rose?
Or where the lily's snowy white,
That throws such beauties on the sight?

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Yet folly is it to declare,
That these are neither sweet nor fair.
The crystal shines with fainter rays
Before the di'mond's brighter blaze;
And fops will say, the di'mond dies
Before the lustre of your eyes:
But I, who deal in truth, deny
That neither shine when you are by.

When zephyrs o'er the blossoms stray,
And sweets along the air convey,
Shan't I the fragrant breeze inhale,
Because you breathe a sweeter gale?

Sweet are the flow'rs that deck the field,
Sweet is the smell the blossoms yield;
Sweet is the summer gale that blows,
And sweet (though sweeter you) the rose.

Shall envy then torment your breast,
If you are lovelier than the rest?
For while I give to each her due,
By praising them I flatter you;

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And praising most, I still declare
You fairest, where the rest are fair.

As at his board a FARMER sate,
Replenish'd by his homely treat,
His fav'rite SPANIEL near him stood,
And with his master shar'd the food;
The crackling bones his jaws devour'd,
His lapping tongue the trenchers scour'd;
Till, sated now, supine he lay,
And snor'd the rising fumes away.

The hungry CAT, in turn, drew near,
And humbly crav'd a servant's share;
Her modest worth the master knew,
And straight the fatt'ning morsel threw;
Enrag'd, the snarling cur awoke,
And thus, with spiteful envy, spoke:

They only claim a right to eat,
Who earn by services their meat;
Me, zeal and industry inflame,
[illegible] the fields, and spring the game;

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Or, plunged in the wat'ry wave,
For man the wounded bird to save.
With watchful diligence I keep,
From prowling wolves, his fleecy sheep;
At home, his midnight hours secure,
And drive the robber from the door.
For this his breast with kindness glows;
For this his hand the food bestows;
And shall thy indolence impart
A warmer friendship to his heart;
That thus he robs me of my due,
To pamper such vile things as you?

I own (with meekness, PUSS reply'd)
Superior merit on your side;
Nor does my breast with envy swell,
To find it recompens'd so well;
Yet I, in what my nature can,
Contribute to the good of man.
Whose claws destroy the pilf'ring mouse?
Who drives the vermin from the house?
Or, watchful for the lab'ring swain,
From lurking rats secure the grain?

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From hence, if he rewards bestow,
Why should your heart with gall o'erflow?
Why pine my happiness to see,
Since there's enough for you and me?

Thy words are just, the FARMER cry'd,
And spurn'd the snarler from his side.

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FABLE X.

THE SPIDER AND THE BEE.

THE nymph who walks the public streets,
And sets her cap at all she meets,
May catch the fool who turns to stare;
But men of sense avoid the snare.

As on the margin of the flood,
With silken line, my LYDIA stood,
I smil'd to see the pains you took,
To cover o'er the fraudful hook.
Along the forest as we stray'd,
You saw the boy his lime-twigs spread;
Guess'd you the reason of his fear,
Lest, heedless, we approach'd too near?
For as behind the bush we lay,
The linnet flutter'd on the spray.

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Needs there such caution to delude
The scaly fry, and feather'd brood?
And think you, with inferior art,
To captivate the human heart?
The maid who modestly conceals
Her beauties, while she hides, reveals;
Give but a glimpse, and FANCY draws
Whate'er the GRECIAN VENUS was.
From EVE's first fig-leaf to brocade,
All dress was meant for FANCY's aid,
Which evermore delighted dwells
On what the bashful nymph conceals.

When CELIA struts in man's attire,
She shews too much to raise desire;
But from the hoop's bewitching round,
Her very shoe has power to wound.
The roving eye, the bosom bare,
The forward laugh, the wanton air,
May catch the fop, for gudgeons strike
At the bare hook, and bait, alike;

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While SALMON play regardless by,
Till ART, like NATURE, forms the fly.

Beneath a PEASANT's homely thatch,
A SPIDER long had held her watch;
From morn to night, with restless care,
She spun her web, and wove her snare.
Within the limits of her reign
Lay many a hidden captive, slain;
Or, flutt'ring, struggled in the toils
To burst the chains, and shun her wiles.
A straying BEE, that perch'd hard by,
Beheld her with disdainful eye;
And thus began:—Mean thing! give o'er,
And lay thy slender threads no more;
A thoughtless FLY or two, at most,
Is all the conquest thou canst boast;
For BEES of sense thy arts evade,
We see so plain the nets are laid.

The gaudy TULIP, that displays
Her spreading foliage to the gaze,

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That points her charms at all she sees,
And yields to ev'ry wanton BREEZE,
Attracts not me. Where blushing grows,
Guarded with thorns, the modest ROSE,
Enamour'd round and round I fly,
Or on her fragrant bosom lie;
Reluctant, she my ardour meets,
And, bashful, renders up her sweets.

To wiser heads attention lend,
And learn this lesson from a friend:
She, who with modesty retires,
Adds fuel to her lover's fires;
While such incautious jilts as you,
By folly your own schemes undo.

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FABLE XI.

THE YOUNG LION AND THE APE.

'Tis true, I blame your lover's choice,
Tho' flatter'd by the public voice,
And peevish grow, and sick, to hear
His exclamations, O how fair!
I listen not to wild delights,
And transports of expected nights;
What is to me your hoard of charms,
The whiteness of your neck and arms?
Needs there no acquisition more,
To keep contention from the door?
Yes! pass a fortnight, and you'll find
All beauty cloys but of the mind.

Sense and good humour ever prove
The surest cords to fasten love.

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Yet, PHILLIS, simplest of your sex,
You never think, but to perplex;
Coquetting it with ev'ry APE,
That struts abroad in human shape;
Not that the coxcomb is your taste,
But that it stings your lover's breast.
To-morrow you resign the sway,
Prepar'd to honour and obey;
The tyrant-mistress chang'd for life
To the submission of a wife.
Your follies, if you can, suspend,
And learn instructions from a friend.
Reluctant hear the first address,
Think often, ere you answer, yes;
But once resolv'd, throw off disguise,
And wear your wishes in your eyes.
With caution ev'ry look forbear,
That might create one jealous fear,
A lover's rip'ning hopes confound,
Or give the gen'rous breast a wound;
Contemn the girlish arts to teaze,
Nor use your pow'r unless to please;

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For fools alone with rigour sway,
When, soon or late, they must obey.

The KING OF BRUTES, in life's decline,
Resolv'd dominion to resign;
The beasts were summon'd to appear,
And bend before the royal heir.
They came; a day was fix'd; the crowd
Before their future monarch bow'd.

A dapper MONKEY, pert and vain,
Step'd forth, and thus address'd the train:

Why cringe, my friends, with slavish awe,
Before this pageant king of straw?
Shall we anticipate the hour,
And, ere we feel it, own his pow'r?
The counsels of experience prize,
I know the maxims of the wise;
Subjection let us cast away,
And live the monarchs of to-day;

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'Tis ours the vacant hand to spurn,
And play the tyrant each in turn;
So shall he right from wrong discern,
And mercy, from oppression, learn;
At others woes be taught to melt,
And loath the ills himself has felt.

He spoke; his bosom swell'd with pride,
The youthful LION thus reply'd:

What madness prompts thee to provoke
My wrath, and dare th' impending stroke?
Thou wretched fool! can wrongs impart
Compassion to the feeling heart?
Or teach the grateful breast to glow,
The hand to give, or eye to flow?
Learn'd in the practice of their schools,
From woman thou hast drawn thy rules;
To them return, in such a cause,
From only such expect applause;
The partial sex I don't condemn,
For liking those who copy them.

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Would'st thou the gen'rous LION bind,
By kindness bribe him to be kind;
Good offices their likeness get,
And payment lessens not the debt:
With multiplying hand he gives
The good from others he receives;
Or for the bad makes fair return,
And pays, with int'rest, scorn for scorn.

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FABLE XII.

THE COLT AND THE FARMER.

TELL me, CORINNA, if you can,
Why so averse, so coy, to man?
Did NATURE, lavish of her care,
From her best pattern form you fair,
That you, ungrateful to her cause,
Should mock her gifts, and spurn her laws?
And, miser-like, withhold that store,
Which, by imparting, blesses more?
Beauty's a gift, by heav'n assign'd,
The portion of the female kind;
For this the yielding maid demands
Protection at her lover's hands;
And though, by wasting years, it fade,
Remembrance tells him, once 'twas paid.

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And will you then this wealth conceal,
For AGE to rust, or TIME to steal?
The summer of your youth to rove,
A stranger to the joys of love?
Then, when LIFE'S winter hastens on,
And YOUTH'S fair heritage is gone,
Dow'rless to court some peasant's arms,
To guard your wither'd age from harms!
No gratitude to warm his breast,
For blooming beauty once possess'd;
How will you curse that stubborn pride,
Which drove your bark across the tide;
And, sailing before FOLLY'S wind,
Left sense and happiness behind!

CORINNA, lest these whims prevail,
To such as you I write my tale.

A COLT, for blood and mettled speed,
The choicest of the running breed,
Of youthful strength and beauty vain,
Refus'd subjection to the rein;

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In vain the groom's officious skill
Oppos'd his pride, and check'd his will;
In vain the master's forming care,
Restrain'd with threats, or sooth'd with pray'r;
Of freedom proud, and scorning man,
Wide o'er the spacious plains he ran.
Where'er luxuriant NATURE spread
Her flow'ry carpet o'er the mead,
Or bubbling streams, soft gliding, pass
To cool and freshen up the grass;
Disdaining bounds, he cropp'd the blade,
And wanton'd in the spoil he made.

In plenty thus the summer pass'd,
Revolving winter came at last;
The trees no more a shelter yield;
The verdure withers from the field;
Perpetual snows invest the ground,
In icy chains the streams are bound,
Cold nipping winds, and rattling hail,
His lank, unshelter'd sides assail.

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As round he cast his rueful eyes,
He saw the thatch-roof'd cottage rise;
The prospect touch'd his heart with cheer,
And promis'd kind deliv'rance near.
A stable, erst his scorn and hate,
Was now become his wish'd retreat;
His passion cool, his pride forgot,
A FARMER'S welcome yard he sought.

The master saw his woeful plight,
His limbs, that totter'd with his weight,
And friendly to the stable led,
And saw him litter'd, dress'd, and fed.
In slothful ease all night he lay;
The servants rose at break of day;
The market calls.—Along the road
His back must bear the pond'rous load;
In vain he struggles, or complains—
Incessant blows reward his pains.
To-morrow varies but his toil;
Chain'd to the plough he breaks the soil:

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While scanty meals at night repay
The painful labours of the day.

Subdu'd by toil, with anguish rent,
His self-upbraidings found a vent.
Wretch that I am! he sighing said,
By arrogance and folly led;
Had but my restive youth been brought
To learn the lesson NATURE taught,
Then had I, like my sires of yore,
The prize from ev'ry courser bore;
While man bestow'd rewards and praise,
And females crown'd my latter days.
Now lasting servitude's my lot,
My birth contemn'd, my speed forgot;
Doom'd am I, for my pride, to bear
A living death from year to year.

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FABLE XIII.

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

To know the MISTRESS's humour right,
See if her maids are clean and tight,
If BETTY waits without her stays,
She copies but her LADY'S ways;
When MISS comes in with boist'rous shout,
And drops no court'sey going out,
Depend upon't, MAMMA is one
Who reads, or drinks, too much alone.

If bottled beer her thirst assuage,
She feels enthusiastic rage,
And burns with ardour to inherit
The gifts and workings of the spirit.
If learning crack her giddy brains,
No remedy but death remains.

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Sum up the various ills of life,
And all are sweet to such a wife.
At home, superior wit she vaunts,
And twits her husband with his wants;
Her ragged offspring all around,
Like pigs, are wallowing on the ground.
Impatient ever of controul,
And knows no order but of soul;
With books her litter'd floor is spread,
With nameless authors never read;
Foul linen, petticoats, and lace,
Fill up the intermediate space.
Abroad, at visitings, her tongue
Is never still, and always wrong;
All meanings she defines away,
And stands with truth and sense at bay.

If e'er she meets a gentle heart,
Skill'd in the housewife's useful art;
Who makes her family her care,
And builds contentment's temple there;

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She starts at such mistakes in nature;
And cries, LORD help us! what a creature!

Melissa, if the moral strike,
You'll find the fable not unlike.

An OWL, puff'd up with self-conceit,
Lov'd learning better than his meat;
Old manuscripts he treasur'd up,
And rummag'd ev'ry grocer's shop;
At pastry-cooks was known to ply,
And strip, for science, ev'ry pie.
For modern poetry and wit,
He had read all that BLACKMORE writ.
So intimate with CURL was grown,
His learned treasures were his own;
To all his authors had access,
And sometimes would correct the press.
In logic he acquir'd such knowledge,
You'd swear him fellow of a college.
Alike to ev'ry art and science,
His daring genius bid defiance,

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And swallow'd wisdom with that haste
That cits do custards at a feast.

Within the shelter of a wood,
One evening, as he musing stood,
Hard by, upon a leafy spray,
A NIGHTINGALE began his lay;
Sudden he starts, with anger stung,
And, screeching, interrupts the song.

Pert, busy thing! thy airs give o'er,
And let my contemplation soar—
What is the music of thy voice,
But jarring dissonance and noise?
Be wise—True harmony thou'lt find
Not in the throat, but in the mind;
By empty chirping not attain'd,
But by laborious study gain'd.
Go, read the authors POPE explodes,
Fathom the depth of CIBBER'S odes;
With modern plays improve thy wit,
Read all the learning HENLEY writ,

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And if thou needs must sing, sing then,
And emulate the ways of men:
So shalt thou grow, like me, refin'd,
And bring improvement to thy kind.

Thou wretch! the little warbler cry'd,
Made up of ignorance and pride;
Ask all the birds, and they'll declare
A greater blockhead wings not air.
Read o'er thyself, thy talents scan,
Science was only meant for man.
No senseless authors me molest,
I mind the duties of my nest;
With careful wing protect my young,
And cheer their ev'nings with a song;
Make short the weary trav'ller's way,
And warble in the poet's lay.

Thus, following nature, and her laws,
From men and birds I claim applause,
While, nurs'd in pedantry and sloth,
An OWL is scorn'd alike by both.

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FABLE XIV.

THE SPARROW AND THE DOVE.

It was, as learn'd traditions say,
Upon an APRIL'S blithsome day,
When PLEASURE, ever on the wing,
Return'd, companion of the SPRING,
And cheer'd the birds with am'rous heat,
Instructing little hearts to beat;
A SPARROW, frolic, gay, and young,
Of bold address, and flippant tongue,
Just left his lady of a night,
Like him, to follow new delight.

The youth, of many a conquest vain,
Flew off to seek the chirping train;
The chirping train he quickly found,
And with a saucy ease bow'd round.

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For every she his bosom burns,
And this, and that, he woos by turns;
And here a sigh, and there a bill,
And here—those eyes! so form'd to kill!
And now, with ready tongue, he strings
Unmeaning, soft, resistless things;
With vows, and dem-me's, skill'd to woo,
As other pretty fellows do.
Not that he thought this short essay
A prologue needful to his play;
No, trust me, says our learned letter,
He knew the virtuous sex much better;
But these he held as specious arts,
To shew his own superior parts,
The form of decency to shield,
And give a just pretence to yield.

Thus finishing his courtly play,
He mark'd the fav'rite of a day;
With careless impudence drew near,
And whisper'd HEBREW in her ear;

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A hint which, like the MASON'S sign,
The conscience can alone divine.

The flutt'ring nymph, expert at feigning,
Cry'd, " Sir, pray sir, explain your meaning!
" Go prate to those that may endure ye—
" To me this rudeness! I'll assure ye!"
Then off she glided like a swallow,
As saying—you guess where to follow.

To such as know the party set,
'Tis needless to say where they met;
The PARSON'S barn, as authors mention,
Confess'd the fair had apprehension.
Her honour there, secure from stain,
She held all farther trifling vain;
No more affected to be coy,
But rush'd, licentious, on the joy.

' Hist, love!' the male companion cry'd,
' Retire awhile, I fear we're 'spy'd:'

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Nor was the caution vain; he saw
A TURTLE rustling in the straw,
While o'er her callow brood she hung,
And fondly thus address'd her young:

" Ye tender objects of my care!
" Peace, peace, ye little helpless pair;
" Anon he comes, your gentle sire,
" And brings you all your hearts require.
" For us, his infants and his bride,
" For us, with only love to guide,
" Our lord assumes an EAGLE'S speed,
" And, like a LION, dares to bleed.
" Nor yet by wintry skies confin'd,
" He mounts upon the rudest wind,
" From danger tears the vital spoil,
" And with affection sweetens toil.
" Ah! cease, too vent'rous—cease to dare,
" In thine, our dearer safety spare!
" From him, ye cruel FALCONS, stray;
" And turn, ye FOWLERS, far away.

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" Should I survive to see the day,
" That tears me from myself away;
" That cancels all that heav'n could give,
" The life, by which alone I live;
" Alas! how more than lost were I,
" Who in the thought already die!

" Ye pow'rs, who men and birds obey,
" Great rulers of your creatures, say,
" Why mourning comes, by bliss convey'd,
" And ev'n the sweets of love allay'd?
" Where grows enjoyment, tall and fair,
" Around it twines entangling care;
" While fear, for what our souls possess,
" Enervates ev'ry pow'r to bless;
" Yet FRIENDSHIP forms the bliss above,
" And LIFE, what art thou, without LOVE?"—

Our HERO, who had heard apart,
Felt something moving in his heart;
But quickly, with disdain, suppress'd
The virtue rising in his breast;

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And, first, he feign'd to laugh aloud,
And next, approaching, smil'd and bow'd.

'MADAM, you must not think me rude,
'Good manners never can intrude;
'I vow I came through pure good-nature;
'(Upon my soul a charming creature!)
'Are these the comforts of a wife?
'This careful, cloister'd, moping life?
'No doubt, that odious thing, call'd duty,
'Is a sweet province for a beauty.
'Thou pretty ignorance! thy will
'Is measur'd to thy want of skill;
'That good old-fashion'd dame, thy mother,
'Has taught thy infant years no other.
'The greatest ill in the creation
'Is, sure, the want of education!

'But think ye (tell me without feigning)
'Have all these charms no farther meaning?
'Dame NATURE, if you don't forget her,
'Might teach your ladyship much better.

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'For shame, reject this mean employment,
'Enter the world, and taste enjoyment;
'Where time, by circling bliss we measure,
'Beauty was form'd alone for pleasure;
'Come, prove the blessing, follow me;
'Be wise, be happy, and be free.'

"Kind sir," reply'd our MATRON chaste,
"Your zeal seems pretty much in haste;
"I own the fondness to be blest,
"Is a deep thirst in every breast;
"Of blessings too I have my store,
"Yet quarrel not, should heav'n give more;
"Then prove the change to be expedient,
"And think me, sir, your most obedient."
Here turning, as to one inferior,
Our gallant spoke, and smil'd superior:
'Methinks, to quit your boasted station
'Requires a world of hesitation;
'Where brats and bonds are held a blessing,
'The case, I doubt, is past redressing:

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'Why, child, suppose the joys I mention
'Were the mere fruits of my invention,
'You've cause sufficient for your carriage,
'In flying from the curse of marriage;
'That sly decoy, with vary'd snares,
'That takes your widgeons in by pairs;
'Alike to husband, and to wife,
'The cure of love, and bane of life;
'The only method of forecasting
'To make misfortune firm and lasting;
'The sin, by heav'n's peculiar sentence,
'Unpardon'd, through a life's repentance.
'It is the double snake, that weds
'A common tail to diff'rent heads;
'That leads the carcase still astray,
'By dragging each a diff'rent way.
'Of all the ills that may attend me,
'From marriage, mighty GODS, defend me!

'Give me frank NATURE's wild demesne,
'And boundless tract of air serene,

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'Where FANCY, ever wing'd for change,
'Delights to sport, delights to range!
'There, LIBERTY! to thee is owing
'Whate'er of bliss is worth bestowing;
'Delights, still vary'd, and divine,
'Sweet goddess of the hills! are thine.

'What say you now, you pretty pink, you?
'Have I, for once, spoke reason, think you?
'You take me now for no romancer—
'Come, never study for an answer;
'Away, cast ev'ry care behind ye,
'And fly where joy alone shall find ye.'

"Soft yet," return'd our female fencer,
"A question more, or so—and then, sir.
"You've rallied me with sense exceeding,
"With much fine wit, and better breeding;
"But pray, sir, how do you contrive it?
"Do those of your world never wive it?"
'No, no,' "How then?" 'Why dare I tell
'What does the business full as well.'

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" Do you ne'er love?" ' An hour at leisure.'
" Have you no friendship?" ' Yes, for pleasure.'
" No care for little ones?" ' We get 'em;
' The rest the mothers mind, and let 'em.'

" Thou wretch!" rejoin'd the kindling DOVE,
" Quite lost to life, as lost to love!
" Whene'er misfortunes come, how just!
" And come, misfortune surely must;
" In the dread season of dismay,
" In that your hour of trial, say,
" Who then shall prop your sinking heart?
" Who bear AFFLICTION'S weightier part?

" Say, when the black-brow'd welkin bends,
" And WINTER'S gloomy form impends,
" To mourning turns all transient cheer,
" And blasts the melancholy year;
" For times at no persuasion stay,
" Nor vice can find perpetual MAY;
" Then where's that tongue, by FOLLY fed,
" That soul of pertness, whither fled?

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" All shrunk within thy lonely nest,
" Forlorn, abandon'd, and unbless'd;
" No friends, by cordial bonds ally'd,
" Shall seek thy cold unsocial side;
" No chirping prattlers to delight,
" Shall turn the long-enduring night;
" No bride her words of balm impart,
" And warm thee at her constant heart.

" FREEDOM, restrain'd by REASON'S force,
" Is as the sun's unvarying course,
" Benignly active, sweetly bright,
" Affording warmth, affording light;
" But torn from VIRTUE'S sacred rules,
" Becomes a comet, gaz'd by fools,
" Foreboding cares, and storms, and strife,
" And fraught with all the plagues of life.

" Thou fool! by union every creature
" Subsists, through universal nature;
" And this, to beings void of mind,
" Is wedlock of a meaner kind.

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" While womb'd in space, primeval clay
" A yet unfashion'd embryo lay;
" The source of endless good above
" Shot down his spark of kindling love;
" Touch'd by the all-enliv'ning flame,
" Then motion first exulting came,
" Each atom sought its sep'rate class,
" Through many a fair enamour'd mass;
" Love cast the central charm around,
" And with eternal nuptials bound.
" Then FORM and ORDER, o'er the sky
" First train'd their bridal pomp on high;
" The SUN display'd his orb to sight,
" And burn'd with HYMENEAL light.

" Hence NATURE'S virgin womb conceiv'd,
" And with the genial burthen heav'd;
" Forth came the oak, her first born heir,
" And scal'd the breathing steep of air;
" Then infant stems, of various use,
" Imbib'd her soft maternal juice.

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" The flow'rs, in early bloom disclos'd,
" Upon her fragrant breast repos'd;
" Within her warm embraces grew
" A race, of endless form and hue;
" Then pour'd her lesser offspring round,
" And fondly cloth'd their parent ground.

" Nor here alone the virtue reign'd,
" By matter's cumb'rous form detain'd,
" But thence, subliming, and refin'd,
" Aspir'd, and reach'd its kindred mind.
" Caught in the fond celestial fire,
" The mind perceiv'd unknown desire;
" And now with kind effusion flow'd,
" And now with cordial ardours glow'd,
" Beheld the sympathetic fair,
" And lov'd its own resemblance there;
" On all, with circling radiance, shone,
" But, cent'ring, fix'd on one alone;
" There clasp'd the heav'n-appointed wife,
" And doubled every joy of life.

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" Here, ever blessing, ever blest,
" Resides this beauty of the breast;
" As from his palace here the god
" Still beams effulgent bliss abroad;
" Here gems his own eternal round
" The ring by which the world is bound;
" Here bids his seat of empire grow,
" And builds his little heav'n below.

" The bridal partners thus ally'd,
" And thus in sweet accordance tied,
" One body, heart, and spirit live,
" Enrich'd by ev'ry joy they give;
" Like ECHO, from her vocal hold,
" Return'd in music twenty-fold.
" Their union firm, and undecay'd,
" Nor TIME can shake, nor POW'R invade;
" But, as the stem and scion stand
" Ingrafted by a skilful hand,
" They check the TEMPEST'S wintry rage,
" And bloom and strengthen into age.

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" A thousand amities unknown,
" And pow'rs, perceiv'd by LOVE alone;
" Endearing looks, and chaste desire,
" Fan and support the mutual fire,
" Whose flame, perpetual as refin'd,
" Is fed by an immortal MIND.

" Nor yet the nuptial sanction ends,
" Like NILE, it opens and descends,
" Which, by apparent windings led,
" We trace to its celestial head.
" The sire, first springing from above,
" Becomes the source of life and love,
" And gives his filial heir to flow,
" In fondness down on sons below;
" Thus roll'd in one continu'd tide,
" To TIME'S extremest verge they glide;
" While kindred streams, on either hand,
" Branch forth in blessings o'er the land.
" Thee, wretch! no lisping babe shall name,
" No late-returning brother claim;

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" No kinsman on thy road rejoice,
" No sister greet thy ent'ring voice;
" With partial eyes no parent see,
" And bless their years restor'd in thee.

" In age rejected, or declin'd,
" An ALIEN ev'n among thy kind,
" The partner of thy scorn'd embrace
" Shall play the wanton in thy face;
" Each spark unplume thy little pride,
" All friendship fly thy faithless side;
" Thy name shall, like thy carcase, rot,
" In sickness spurn'd, in death forgot.

" All-giving POW'R! great source of life!
" O hear the parent! hear the wife!
" That life thou lendest from above,
" Though little, make it large in love;
" O bid my feeling heart expand
" To ev'ry claim, on ev'ry hand;
" To those, from whom my days I drew,
" To these in whom those days renew;

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" To all my kin, however wide,
" In cordial warmth, as blood ally'd,
" To friends with steely fetters twin'd,
" And to the cruel, not unkind!
" But chief, the lord of my desire,
" My life, myself, my soul, my sire;
" Friends, children, all that wish can claim,
" Chaste passion clasp, and rapture name!
" O spare him, spare him, GRACIOUS POW'R!
" O give him to my latest hour!
" Let me my length of life employ,
" To give my sole enjoyment joy;
" His love, let mutual love excite,
" Turn all my cares to his delight,
" And ev'ry needless blessing spare,
" Wherein my darling wants a share.
" When he with graceful action woos,
" And sweetly bills and fondly coos,
" Ah! deck me to his eyes alone,
" With charms attractive as his own,
" And in my circling wings caress'd,
" Give all the lover to my breast.

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" Then in our chaste, connubial bed,
" My bosom pillow'd for his head,
" His eyes with blissful slumbers close,
" And watch, with me, my lord's repose;
" Your peace around his temples twine,
" And love him with a love like mine.

" And, for I know his gen'rous flame,
" Beyond whate'er my sex can claim,
" Me, too, to your protection take,
" And spare me for my husband's sake;
" Let one unruffled calm delight
" The loving and belov'd unite;
" One pure desire our bosoms warm,
" One will direct, one wish inform;
" Through life one mutual aid sustain,
" In death one peaceful grave contain."

While, swelling with the darling theme,
Her accents pour'd an endless stream,
The well-known wings a sound impart,
That reach'd her ear, and touch'd her heart;

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Quick dropp'd the music of her tongue,
And forth, with eager joy, she sprung;
As swift her ent'ring consort flew,
And plum'd and kindled at the view;
Their wings, their souls, embracing meet,
Their hearts with answ'ring measure beat;
Half lost in sacred sweets, and bless'd
With raptures felt, but ne'er express'd.

Straight to her humble roof she led
The partner of her spotless bed;
Her young, a flutt'ring pair, arise,
Their welcome sparkling in their eyes,
Transported, to their sire they bound,
And hang with speechless action round.
In pleasure wrapt, the parents stand,
And see their little wings expand;
The sire, his life-sustaining prize
To each expecting bill applies;
There fondly pours the wheaten spoil,
With transport giv'n, though won with toil;

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While all collected at the sight,
And silent, through supreme delight,
The FAIR high heav'n of bliss beguiles,
And on her lord and infants smiles.

The SPARROW, whose attention hung
Upon the DOVE's enchanting tongue,
Of all his little slights disarm'd,
And from himself by VIRTUE charm'd,
When now he saw, what only seem'd,
A fact, so late a fable deem'd;
His soul to envy he resign'd,
His hours of folly to the wind;
In secret wish'd a TURTLE too,
And, sighing to himself, withdrew.

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FABLE XV.

THE FEMALE SEDUCERS.

'Tis said of WIDOW, MAID, and WIFE,
That honour is a WOMAN'S life;
Unhappy sex! who only claim
A being in the breath of fame,
Which, tainted, not the quick'ning gales
That sweep SABÆA'S spicy vales,
Nor all the healing sweets restore,
That breathe along ARABIA'S shore.

The trav'ller, if he chance to stray,
May turn uncensur'd to his way;
Polluted streams again are pure,
And deepest wounds admit a cure;

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But WOMAN! no redemption knows,
The wounds of honour never close.

Tho' distant ev'ry hand to guide,
Nor skill'd on life's tempestuous tide,
If once her feeble bark recede,
Or deviate from the course decreed,
In vain she seeks the friendly shore,
Her swifter folly flies before;
The circling ports against her close,
And shut the wand'rer from repose,
Till by conflicting waves opprest,
Her found'ring pinnace sinks to rest.

Are there no off'rings to atone
For but a single error?—None!
Tho' WOMAN is avow'd of old
No daughter of celestial mould;
Her temp'ring not without allay,
And form'd but of the finer clay;
We challenge from the mortal dame,
The strength angelic natures claim;

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Nay more—for sacred stories tell
That ev'n immortal angels fell.

Whatever fills the teeming sphere
Of humid earth, and ambient air,
With varying elements endu'd,
Was form'd to fall, and rise renew'd.

The stars no fix'd duration know;
Wide oceans ebb, again to flow;
The moon repletes her waning face,
All-beauteous, from her late disgrace;
And suns, that mourn approaching night,
Refulgent rise, with new-born light.

In vain may death and time subdue,
While nature mints her race anew,
And holds some vital spark apart,
Like virtue, hid in ev'ry heart;
'Tis hence, reviving warmth is seen,
To clothe a naked world in green;

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No longer barr'd by winter's cold,
Again the gates of life unfold;
Again each insect tries his wing,
And lifts fresh pinions on the spring;
Again from ev'ry latent root
The bladed stem and tendril shoot,
Exhaling incense to the skies,
Again to perish, and to rise.

And must weak WOMAN then disown
The change to which a world is prone?
In one meridian brightness shine,
And ne'er like ev'ning suns decline?
Resolv'd and firm alone?—Is this
What we demand of WOMAN?—Yes!

But should the spark of vestal fire,
In some unguarded hour expire;
Or should the nightly thief invade
HESPERIA'S chaste and sacred shade,
Of all the blooming spoils possess'd,
The dragon, honour, charm'd to rest,

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Shall VIRTUE's flame no more return?
No more with virgin splendour burn?
No more the ravag'd garden blow
With spring's succeeding blossom?—No!
Pity may mourn, but not restore,
And WOMAN falls—to rise no more.

Within this sublunary sphere,
A country lies—no matter where;
The clime may readily be found,
By all who tread poetic ground;
A stream, call'd LIFE, across it glides,
And equally the land divides;
And here, of VICE the province lies,
And there, the hills of VIRTUE rise.

Upon a mountain's airy stand,
Whose summit look'd to either land,
An ancient pair their dwelling chose,
As well for prospect as repose;
For mutual faith they long were fam'd,
And TEMP'RANCE, and RELIGION, nam'd.

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A num'rous progeny divine
Confess'd the honours of their line;
But in a little daughter fair
Was center'd more than half their care;
For heav'n, to gratulate her birth,
Gave signs of future joy to earth.
White was the robe this infant wore,
And CHASTITY the name she bore.

As now the maid in stature grew,
(A flow'r just op'ning to the view)
Oft thro' her native lawns she stray'd,
And wrestling with the lambkins play'd;
Her looks diffusive sweets bequeath'd,
The breeze grew purer as she breath'd,
The morn her radiant blush assum'd,
The spring with earlier fragrance bloom'd,
And NATURE yearly took delight,
Like her, to dress the world in white.

But when her rising form was seen
To reach the crisis of fifteen;

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White del.t Storer sculp.t

Lovely Penitent, arise!
Come, and claim thy kindred Skies;

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Her parents up the mountain's head,
With anxious step, their darling led;
By turns they snatch'd her to their breast,
And thus the fears of age express'd;

" O joyful cause of many a care!
" O daughter, too divinely fair!
" Yon world, on this important day,
" Demands thee to a dang'rous way;
" A painful journey all must go,
" Whose doubtful period none can know;
" Whose due direction who can find,
" Where REASON'S mute, and SENSE is blind!
" Ah! what unequal leaders these,
" Thro' such a wide perplexing maze!
" Then mark the warnings of the wise,
" And learn what love and years advise.

" Far to the right thy prospect bend,
" Where yonder tow'ring hills ascend;
" Lo! there the arduous path's in view,
" Which VIRTUE, and her sons, pursue;

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" With toil, o'er less'ning earth they rise,
" And gain, and gain upon the skies.—
" Narrow's the way her children tread,
" No walk for pleasure smoothly spread;
" But rough, and difficult, and steep,
" Painful to climb, and hard to keep.

" Fruits immature those lands dispense,
" A food indelicate to sense,
" Of taste unpleasant, yet from those
" Pure HEALTH, with cheerful VIGOUR flows;
" And strength unfeeling of decay,
" Throughout the long laborious way.

" Hence, as they scale that heav'nly road,
" Each limb is lighten'd of its load:
" From earth refining still they go,
" And leave the mortal weight below;
" Then spreads the strait, the doubtful clears,
" And smooth the rugged path appears;
" For custom turns fatigue to ease,
" And, taught by VIRTUE, PAIN can please.

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" At length, the toilsome journey o'er,
" And near the bright celestial shore,
" A gulf, black, fearful, and profound,
" Appears, of either world the bound.
" Thro' darkness, leading up to light,
" Sense backward shrinks, and shuns the sight;
" For there the transitory train,
" Of time, and form, and care, and pain,
" And matter's gross incumb'ring mass,
" Man's late associates, cannot pass,
" But sinking, quit th' immortal charge,
" And leave the wond'ring soul at large;
" Lightly she wings her obvious way,
" And mingles with eternal day.

" Thither, O thither, wing thy speed,
" Tho' PLEASURE charm, or PAIN impede;
" To such th' all-bounteous pow'r has giv'n,
" For present earth, a future heav'n;
" For trivial loss, unmeasur'd gain,
" And endless bliss, for transient pain.

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" Then fear, ah! fear, to turn thy sight,
" Where yonder flow'ry fields invite;
" Wide on the left the path-way bends,
" And with pernicious ease descends;
" There, sweet to sense, and fair to show,
" New-planted EDEN seems to blow;
" Trees that delicious poison bear,
" For DEATH is vegetable there.

" Hence is the frame of health unbrac'd,
" Each sinew slack'ning at the taste;
" The soul to passion yields her throne,
" And sees with organs not her own;
" While, like the slumb'rer in the night,
" Pleas'd with the shadowy dream of light,
" Before her alienated eyes
" The scenes of fairy-land arise;
" The puppet-world's amusing show,
" Dipt in the gaily colour'd bow;
" Sceptres, and wreaths, and glitt'ring things,
" The toys of infants and of kings,

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" That tempt along the baneful plain,
" The idly wise, and lightly vain;
" Till verging on the gulfy shore,
" Sudden they sink, to rise no more.

" But list to what thy FATES declare,
" Tho' thou art WOMAN, frail as fair,
" If once thy sliding foot should stray,
" Once quit yon heav'n-appointed way,
" For thee, lost maid, for thee alone,
" Nor pray'rs shall plead, nor tears atone;
" Reproach, scorn, infamy, and hate,
" On thy returning steps shall wait.—
" Thy form be loath'd by ev'ry eye,
" And ev'ry foot thy presence fly."

Thus arm'd with words of potent sound,
Like guardian-angels plac'd around;
A charm, by truth divinely cast,
Forward our young advent'rer pass'd.
Forth from her sacred eye-lids sent,
Like morn, fore-running, radiance went,

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While HONOUR, hand-maid, late assign'd,
Upheld her lucid train behind.

Awe-struck, the much-admiring crowd
Before the virgin-vision bow'd;
Gaz'd with an ever-new delight,
And caught fresh virtues at the sight;
For not of earth's unequal frame
They deem'd the heav'n-compounded dame,
If matter, sure the most refin'd,
High-wrought, and temper'd into mind,
Some darling daughter of the day,
And body'd by her native ray.

Where'er she passes, thousands bend,
And thousands, where she moves, attend;
Her ways observant eyes confess,
Her steps pursuing praises bless;
While to the elevated maid
Oblations, as to HEAV'N, are paid.

'Twas on an ever-blithsome day,
The jovial birth of rosy MAY,

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When genial warmth, no more suppress'd,
New melts the frost in every breast;
The cheek with secret flushing dies,
And looks kind things from chastest eyes;
The SUN with healthier visage glows,
Aside his clouded kerchief throws,
And dances up th' ethereal plain,
Where late he us'd to climb with pain;
While NATURE, as from bonds set free,
Springs out, and gives a loose to glee.

And now for momentary rest,
The nymph her travell'd step repress'd,
Just turn'd to view the stage attain'd,
And glory'd in the height she gain'd.

Out-stretch'd before her wide survey,
The realms of sweet PERDITION lay,
And pity touch'd her soul with woe,
To see a world so lost below;
When straight the breeze began to breathe
Airs, gently wafted from beneath,

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That bore commission'd witchcraft thence,
And reach'd her sympathy of sense;
No sounds of discord, that disclose
A people sunk, and lost in woes;
But as of present good possess'd,
The very triumph of the bless'd;
The maid in wrapt attention hung,
While thus approaching SIRENS sung.

'Hither, fairest, hither haste,
'Brightest beauty, come and taste
'What the pow'rs of bliss unfold;
'Joys too mighty to be told;
'Taste what ecstasies they give,
'Dying raptures taste, and live.

'In thy lap, disdaining measure,
'NATURE empties all her treasure;
'Soft desires, that sweetly languish,
'Fierce delights, that rise to anguish:
'Fairest, dost thou yet delay?
'Brightest beauty, come away!

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'List not, when the froward chide,
'Sons of pedantry and pride;
'Snarlers, to whose feeble sense
'APRIL sun-shine is offence;
'Age and envy will advise,
'Ev'n against the joys they prize.
'Come, in PLEASURE's balmy bowl
'Slake the thirstings of thy soul,
'Till thy raptur'd pow'rs are fainting
'With enjoyment, past the painting:
'Fairest, dost thou yet delay?
'Brightest beauty, come away!'

So sung the SIRENS, as of yore,
Upon the false AUSONIAN shore;
And, O! for that preventing chain,
That bound ULYSSES on the main,
That so our FAIR ONE might withstand
The covert ruin now at hand.

The song her charm'd attention drew,
When now the tempters stood in view;

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CURIOSITY with prying eyes,
And hand of busy, bold emprize;
Like HERMES, feather'd were her feet,
And like fore-running fancy fleet;
By search untaught, by toil untir'd,
To novelty she still aspir'd,
Tasteless of ev'ry good possess'd,
And but in expectation bless'd.

With her, associate, PLEASURE came,
Gay PLEASURE, frolic-loving dame!
Her mien, all swimming in delight,
Her beauties, half reveal'd to sight;
Loose flow'd her garments from the ground
And caught the kissing winds around.
As erst MEDUSA'S looks were known
To turn beholders into stone,
A dire reversion here they felt,
And in the eye of pleasure melt.
Her glance of sweet persuasion charm'd,
Unnerv'd the strong, the steel'd disarm'd;

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No safety, ev'n the flying find,
Who, vent'rous, looks not once behind.

Thus was the much-admiring maid,
While distant, more than half betray'd.
With smiles, and adulation bland,
They join'd her side, and seiz'd her hand;
Their touch envenom'd sweets instill'd,
Her frame with new pulsations thrill'd,
While half consenting, half denying,
Reluctant now, and now complying,
Amidst a war of hopes and fears,
Of trembling wishes, smiling tears,
Still down, and down, the winning pair
Compell'd the struggling, yielding fair.

As when some stately vessel, bound
To blest ARABIA'S distant ground,
Borne from her courses, haply lights
Where BARCA'S flow'ry clime invites;
Conceal'd around whose treach'rous land,
Lurks the dire rock, and dang'rous sand;

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The pilot warns, with sail and oar,
To shun the much-suspected shore
In vain: the tide too subtly strong,
Still bears the wrestling bark along,
Till found'ring, she resigns to fate,
And sinks, o'erwhelmn'd, with all her freight.

So baffling ev'ry bar to sin,
And heav'n's own pilot plac'd within,
Along the devious smooth descent,
With pow'rs increasing as they went,
The DAMES, accustom'd to subdue,
As with a rapid current drew;
And o'er the fatal bounds convey'd
The lost, the long-reluctant maid.

Here stop, ye fair ones, and beware,
Nor send your fond affections there;
Yet, yet your darling, now deplor'd,
May turn, to you and HEAV'N restor'd;
Till then, with weeping HONOUR, wait
The servant of her better fate,

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With HONOUR left upon the shore,
Her friend and handmaid now no more;
Nor, with the guilty world, upbraid
The fortunes of a wretch betray'd;
But o'er her failing cast a veil,
Rememb'ring you, yourselves, are frail.
And now, from all-enquiring light,
Fast fled the conscious shades of night;
The damsel, from a short repose,
Confounded at her plight, arose.

As when with slumb'rous weight opprest,
Some wealthy miser sinks to rest,
Where felons eye the glitt'ring prey,
And steal his hoard of joys away:
He, borne where golden INDUS streams,
Of pearl and quarry'd di'mond dreams,
Like MIDAS, turns the glebe to ore,
And stands all wrapt amidst his store;
But wakens, naked, and despoil'd
Of that for which his years had toil'd.

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So far'd the NYMPH, her treasure flown,
And turn'd, like NIOBE, to stone;
Within, without, obscure and void,
She felt all ravag'd, all destroy'd.
And, O! thou curs'd insidious coast,
Are these the blessings thou canst boast?
These, VIRTUE! these the joys they find,
Who leave thy heav'n-topt hills behind!
Shade me, ye pines, ye caverns hide,
Ye mountains cover me! she cry'd.

Her trumpet SLANDER rais'd on high,
And told the tidings to the sky;
CONTEMPT discharg'd a living dart,
A side-long viper to her heart;
REPROACH breath'd poisons o'er her face,
And soil'd, and blasted ev'ry grace;
Officious SHAME, her handmaid new,
Still turn'd the mirror to her view;
While those in crimes the deepest dy'd,
Approach'd to whiten at her side;

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And ev'ry lewd insulting dame
Upon her folly rose to fame.

What should she do; attempt once more
To gain the late-deserted shore?
So trusting, back the mourner flew,
As fast the train of fiends pursue.

Again the farther shore's attain'd,
Again the land of VIRTUE gain'd;
But ECHO gathers in the wind,
And shows her instant foes behind.
Amaz'd! with headlong speed she tends,
Where late she left an host of friends;
Alas! those shrinking friends decline,
Nor longer own that form divine;
With fear they mark the following cry,
And from the lonely trembler fly;
Or backward drive her on the coast
Where PEACE was wreck'd, and HONOUR lost.

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From earth thus hoping aid in vain;
To HEAV'N, not daring to complain;
No truce, by hostile CLAMOUR giv'n,
And from the face of FRIENDSHIP driv'n;
The NYMPH sunk prostrate on the ground,
With all her weight of woes around.

Enthron'd within a circling sky,
Upon a mount, o'er mountains high,
All radiant sat, as in a shrine,
VIRTUE, first effluence divine;
Far, far above the scenes of woe,
That shut this cloud-wrapt world below:
Superior goddess! essence bright!
Beauty of uncreated light,
Whom should mortality survey,
As doom'd upon a certain day;
The breath of frailty must expire,
The world dissolve in living fire;
The gems of heav'n, and solar flame,
Be quench'd by her eternal beam,

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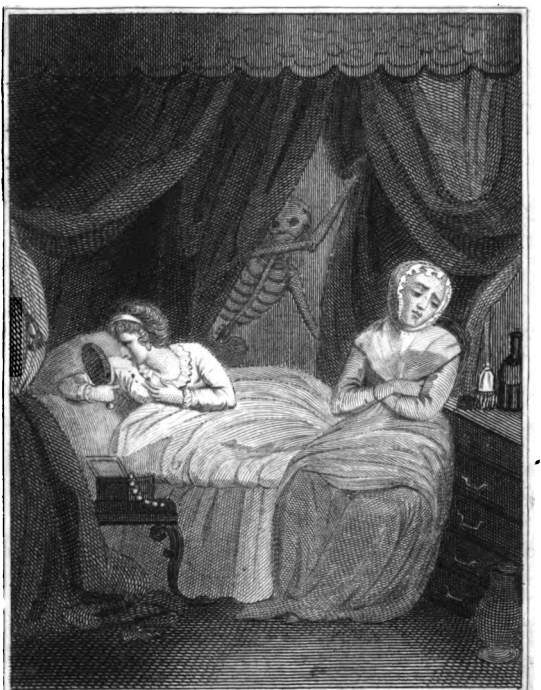

White del. Rothwell sculp.

Vanity.

Thus far extends my friendly pow'r,
Nor quits her in her latest hours.

Page 108.

London: Published by Scatchard & Letterman, Ave Maria Lane.

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And nature, quick'ning in her eye,
To raise a new-born phœnix, die.

Hence, unreveal'd to mortal view,
A veil around her form she threw,
Which three sad sisters of the shade,
PAIN, CARE, and MELANCHOLY, made.

Thro' this her all-inquiring eye,
Attentive from her station high,
Beheld, abandon'd to despair,
The ruins of her fav'rite fair;
And with a voice, whose awful sound
Appall'd the guilty world around,
Bid the tumultuous winds be still;
To numbers bow'd each list'ning hill;
Uncurl'd the surging of the main,
And smooth'd the thorny bed of pain;
The golden harp of heav'n she strung,
And thus the tuneful goddess sung:

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" Lovely PENITENT, arise,
" Come, and claim thy kindred skies;
" Come, thy sister angels say,
" Thou hast wept thy stains away.

" Let experience now decide,
" Twixt the good and evil, try'd,
" In the smooth enchanted ground,
" Say, unfold the treasures found.

" Structures, rais'd by morning dreams,
" Sands that trip the flitting streams,
" Down that anchors on the air,
" Clouds that paint their changes there.

" Seas that smoothly dimpling lie,
" While the storm impends on high,
" Showing in an obvious glass,
" Joys that in possession pass.

" Transient, fickle, light, and gay,
" Flatt'ring, only to betray;
" What, alas! can life contain?
" Life, like all its circles, vain.

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" Will the STORK, intending rest,
" On the billow build her nest?
" Will the BEE demand his store
" From the bleak and bladeless shore!

" MAN alone, intent to stray,
" Ever turns from WISDOM'S way;
" Lays up wealth in foreign land,
" Sows the sea, and plows the sand.

" Soon this elemental mass,
" Soon th' encumb'ring world shall pass;
" Form be wrapt in wasting fire,
" TIME be spent, and LIFE expire.

" Then, ye boasted works of men!
" Where is your asylum then?
" Sons of PLEASURE, sons of CARE,
" Tell me, mortals, tell me where?

" Gone, like traces on the deep,
" Like a sceptre grasp'd in sleep;
" Dews exhal'd from morning glades,
" Melting snows, and gliding shades.

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" Pass the world, and what's behind?
" Virtue's gold, by fire refin'd;
" From an universe deprav'd,
" From the wreck of nature sav'd.

" Like the life-supporting grain,
" Fruit of patience and of pain,
" On the swain's autumnal day,
" Winnow'd from the chaff away.

" Little TREMBLER, fear no more,
" Thou hast plenteous crops in store;
" Seeds, by genial sorrows sown,
" More than all thy scorners own.

" What, tho' hostile earth despise,
" Heaven beholds with gentler eyes;
" Heav'n thy friendless steps shall guide,
" Cheer thy hours, and guard thy side.

" When the fatal trump shall sound,
" When th' immortals pour around,
" Heav'n shall thy return attest,
" Hail'd by myriads of the bless'd.

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" Little native of the skies,
" Lovely PENITENT, arise,
" Calm thy bosom, clear thy brow,
" VIRTUE is thy sister now.

" More delightful are my woes
" Than the rapture PLEASURE knows;
" Richer far the weeds I bring
" Than the robes that grace a king.

" On my wars of shortest date,
" Crowns of endless triumph wait;
" On my cares a period bless'd,
" On my toils, eternal rest.

" Come, with VIRTUE at thy side,
" Come, be ev'ry bar defy'd,
" Till we gain our native shore;
" Sister, come, and turn no more."

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FABLE XVI.

LOVE AND VANITY.

THE breezy morning breath'd perfume,
The wak'ning flow'rs unveil'd their bloom;
Up with the sun, from short repose,
Gay HEALTH, and lusty LABOUR, rose;
The milk-maid carol'd at her pail,
And shepherds whistled o'er the dale;
When LOVE, who led a rural life,
Remote from bustle, state, and strife,
Forth from his thatch-roof'd cottage stray'd,
And stroll'd along the dewy glade.

A nymph, who lightly tripp'd it by,
To quick attention turn'd his eye;
He mark'd the gesture of the fair,
Her self-sufficient grace and air;

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Her steps that mincing meant to please,
Her study'd negligence and ease;
And curious to inquire what meant
This thing of prettiness and paint,
Approaching spoke, and bow'd observant:
The lady, slightly—" Sir, your servant."

' Such beauty in so rude a place!
' Fair one, you do the country grace;
' At court, no doubt, the public care,
' But LOVE has small acquaintance there.'

" Yes, sir," reply'd the flutt'ring dame,
" This form confesses whence it came;
" But dear VARIETY, you know,
" Can make us pride and pomp forego;
" My name is VANITY: I sway
" The utmost islands of the sea;
" Within my court all honour centers,
" I raise the meanest soul that enters,
" Endow with latent gifts and graces,
" And model fools for posts and places.

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" As VANITY appoints at pleasure,
" The world receives its weight and measure;
" Hence all the grand concerns of life,
" Joys, cares, plagues, passion, peace, and strife.

" Reflect how far my pow'r prevails,
" When I step in where NATURE fails:
" And ev'ry breach of sense repairing,
" Am bounteous still, where heav'n is sparing.

" But chief, in all their arts and airs,
" Their playing, painting, pouts, and pray'rs,
" Their various habits and complexions,
" Fits, frolics, foibles, and perfections,
" Their robing, curling, and adorning,
" From noon to night, from night to morning,
" From six to sixty, sick or sound,
" I rule the female world around."—

' Hold there a moment, CUPID cry'd,
' Nor boast dominion quite so wide;

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'Was there no province to invade,
'But that by love and meekness sway'd;
'All other empire I resign,
'But be the sphere of beauty mine.

'For in the downy lawn of rest,
'That opens on a woman's breast,
'Attended by my peaceful train,
'I choose to live, and choose to reign.

'Far-sighted FAITH I bring along,
'And TRUTH, above an army strong,
'And CHASTITY, of icy mould,
'Within the burning tropics cold;
'And LOWLINESS, to whose mild brow
'The pow'r and pride of nations bow;
'And MODESTY, with down-cast eye,
'That lends the morn her virgin dye;
'And INNOCENCE, array'd in light,
'And HONOUR, as a tow'r upright;
'With sweetly winning graces, more
'Than poets ever dreamt of yore;

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'In unaffected conduct free,
'All smiling sisters, three times three;
'And rosy PEACE, the cherub bless'd,
'That nightly sings us all to rest.

'Hence, from the bud of NATURE's prime,
'From the first step of infant time,
'Woman, the world's appointed light,
'Has skirted ev'ry shade with white;
'Has stood for imitation high,
'To ev'ry heart, and ev'ry eye;
'From ancient deeds of fair renown,
'Has brought her bright memorials down;
'To time affix'd perpetual youth,
'And form'd each tale of love and truth.

'Upon a new PROMETHEAN plan,
'She moulds the essence of a man,
'Tempers his mass, his genius fires,
'And as a better soul inspires.

'The rude she softens, warms the cold,
'Exalts the meek, and checks the bold;

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'Calls SLOTH from his supine repose,
'Within the coward's bosom glows;
'Of pride unplumes the lofty crest,
'Bids bashful merit stand confess'd;
'And like coarse metal from the mines,
'Collects, irradiates, and refines;
'The gentle science she imparts,
'All manners smooths, informs all hearts;
'From her sweet influence are felt,
'Passions that please, and thoughts that melt.
'To stormy rage she bids controul,
'And sinks serenely on the soul;
'Softens DUCALION'S flinty race,
'And tunes the warring world to peace.

'Thus arm'd to all that's light and vain,
'And freed from thy fantastic chain,
'She fills the sphere, by heav'n assign'd,
'And, rul'd by me, o'er-rules mankind.'

He spoke.—The nymph impatient stood,
And, laughing, thus her speech renew'd:

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" And pray, sir, may I be so bold,
" To hope your pretty tale is told;
" And next demand without a cavil,
" What new UTOPIA do you travel?
" Upon my word, these high-flown fancies
" Shew depth of learning in romances.
" Why, what unfashion'd stuff you tell us,
" Of buckram dames, and tiptoe fellows!
" Go, child, and when you're grown maturer,
" You'll shoot your next opinion surer.

" O, such a pretty knack at painting,
" And all for soft'ning, and for sainting!
" Guess now, who can, a single feature,
" Thro' the whole piece of female nature:
" Then, mark! my looser hand may fit
" The lines too coarse for love to hit.

" 'Tis said, that woman prone to changing,
" Thro' all the rounds of folly ranging,
" On life's uncertain ocean riding,
" No reason, rule, nor rudder guiding,

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" Is like the comet's wand'ring light,
" Eccentric, ominous, and bright;
" Tractless and shifting as the wind,
" A sea whose fathom none can find;
" A moon, still changing and revolving,
" A riddle, past all human solving;
" A bliss, a plague, a heav'n, a hell,
" A——something, that no man can tell.

" Now learn a secret from a friend,
" But keep your counsel and attend:

" Tho' in their tempers thought so distant,
" Nor with their sex, nor selves consistent,
" 'Tis but the diff'rence of a name,
" And ev'ry woman is the same.
" For as the world, however vary'd,
" And thro' unnumber'd changes carry'd,
" Of elemental modes and forms,
" Clouds, meteors, colours, calms, and storms;
" Tho' in a thousand suits array'd,
" Is of one subject matter made;

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" So, sir, a woman's constitution,
" The world's enigma, finds solution.
" And let her form be what you will,
" I am the subject essence still.

" With the first spark of female sense,
" The speck of being, I commence;
" Within the womb make fresh advances,
" And dictate future qualms and fancies;
" Thence in the growing form expand,
" With childhood travel hand in hand,
" And give a taste of all their joys,
" In gewgaws, rattles, pomp, and noise.

" And now, familiar and unaw'd,
" I send the flutt'ring soul abroad;
" Prais'd for her shape, her air, her mien,
" The little goddess, and the queen,
" Takes at her infant shrine oblation,
" And drinks sweet draughts of adulation.

" Now, blooming, tall, erect, and fair,
" To dress becomes her darling care;

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" The realms of beauty then I bound,
" I swell the hoop's enchanted round;
" Shrink in the waist's descending size,
" Heav'd in the snowy bosom rise,
" High on the floating lappet sail,
" Or curl'd in tresses kiss the gale.
" Then to her glass I lead the fair,
" And shew the lovely idol there,
" Where, struck as by divine emotion,
" She bows with most sincere devotion;
" And numb'ring ev'ry beauty o'er,
" In secret bids the world adore.

" Then all for parking and parading,
" Coqueting, dancing, masquerading;
" For balls, plays, courts, and crowds, what passion!
" And churches, sometimes, if the fashion:
" For woman's sense of right and wrong
" Is rul'd by the almighty throng;
" Still turns to each meander tame,
" And swims the straw of ev'ry stream.
" Her soul intrinsic worth rejects,
" Accomplish'd only in defects,

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" Such excellence is her ambition,
" Folly her wisest acquisition;
" And ev'n from pity and disdain,
" She'll cull some reason to be vain.

" Thus, sir, from ev'ry form and feature,
" The wealth and wants of female nature,
" And ev'n from vice, which you'd admire,
" I gather fuel to my fire,
" And on the very base of shame,
" Erect my monument of fame.

" Let me another truth attempt,
" Of which your godship has not dreamt:
" Those shining virtues which you muster,
" Whence think you they derive their lustre?
" From native honour and devotion!
" O yes! a mighty likely notion!
" Trust me, from titled dames to spinners,
" 'Tis I make saints, whoe'er make sinners;
" 'Tis I instruct them to withdraw,
" And hold presumptuous man in awe;

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" For female worth as I inspire,
" In just degrees, still mounts the higher,
" And VIRTUE so extremely nice,
" Demands long toil and mighty price;
" Like SAMPSON'S pillars, fix'd elate,
" I bear the sex's tott'ring state;
" Sap these, and in a moment's space,
" Down sinks the fabric to its base.

" Alike from titles, and from toys,
" I spring, the fount of female joys;
" In ev'ry widow, wife, and miss,
" The sole artificer of bliss.
" For them each tropic I explore;
" I cleave the sand of ev'ry shore;
" To them uniting INDIA'S sail,
" SABÆA breathes her farthest gale;
" For them the bullion I refine,
" Dig sense and virtue from the mine;
" And from the bowels of invention,
" Spin out the various arts you mention.

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" Nor bliss alone my pow'rs bestow,
" They hold the sov'reign balm of woe;
" Beyond the stoic's boasted art,
" I soothe the heavings of the heart;
" To pain give splendor, and relief,
" And gild the pallid face of grief.

" Alike the palace and the plain,
" Admit the glories of my reign;
" Thro' ev'ry age, in ev'ry nation,
" Taste, talents, tempers, state, and station,
" Whate'er a woman says, I say;
" Whate'er a woman spends, I pay;
" Alike I fill and empty bags,
" Flutter in finery and rags;
" With light coquets thro' folly range,
" And with the prude disdain to change.

" And now, you'd think, 'twixt you and I,
" That things were ripe for a reply—
" But soft— and while I'm in the mood,
" Kindly permit me to conclude;

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" Their utmost mazes to unravel,
" And touch the farthest step they travel:

" When ev'ry pleasure's run a-ground,
" And folly tir'd thro' many a round;
" The nymph, conceiving discontent hence,
" May ripen to an hour's repentance,
" And vapours shed in pious moisture,
" Dismiss her to a church or cloister;
" Then on I lead her, with devotion
" Conspicuous in her dress and motion;
" Inspire the heav'nly-breathing air,
" Roll up the lucid eye in pray'r,
" Soften the voice, and in the face
" Look melting harmony and grace.

" Thus far extends my friendly pow'r,
" Nor quits her in her latest hour;
" The couch of decent pain I spread,
" In form recline her languid head;
" Her thoughts I methodize in death,
" And part not with her parting breath;

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" Then do I set, in order bright,
" A length of fun'ral pomp to sight;
" The glitt'ring tapers, and attire,
" The plumes that whiten o'er her bier;
" And last, presenting to her eye
" Angelic fineries on high,
" To scenes of painted bliss I waft her,
" And form the heav'n she hopes hereafter."

' In truth,' rejoin'd LOVE's gentle god,
' You've gone a tedious length of road;
' And, strange! in all the toilsome way
' No house of kind refreshment lay;
' No nymph, whose virtues might have tempted
' To hold her from her sex exempted.'

" For one, we'll never quarrel, man,
" Take her, and keep her, if you can;
" And pleas'd I yield to your petition,
" Since every fair, by such permission,
" Will hold herself the one selected,
" And so my system stands protected."

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'O deaf to VIRTUE, deaf to GLORY,
'To truths divinely vouch'd in story!'
The godhead, in his zeal return'd,
And kindling at her malice burn'd.
Then sweetly rais'd his voice, and told
Of heav'nly nymphs, rever'd of old;
HYPSIPYLE, who sav'd her sire;
And PORTIA'S love, approv'd by fire;
Alike PENELOPE was quoted,
Nor laurel'd DAPHNE pass'd unnoted,
Nor LAODAMIA'S fatal garter,
Nor fam'd LUCRETIA, honour's martyr,
ALCESTE'S voluntary steel,
And CATHERINE smiling on the wheel.

But who can hope to plant conviction,
Where cavil grows on contradiction!
Some she evades, or disavows,
Demurs to all, and none allows;
A kind of ancient things, call'd fables!
And thus the goddess turn'd the tables.

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Now both in argument grew high,
And choler flash'd from either eye;
Nor wonder each refus'd to yield
The conquest of so fair a field.

When happily arriv'd in view
A goddess, whom our grandames knew,
Of aspect grave, and sober gait,
Majestic, awful, and sedate,
As heav'n's autumnal eve serene,
Where not a cloud o'ercasts the scene,
Once PRUDENCE call'd, a matron fam'd,
And in old ROME CORNELIA nam'd.
Quick, at a venture, both agree
To leave their strife to her decree.

And now by each the facts were stated,
In form and manner as related;
The case was short—They crav'd opinion,
Which held o'er females chief dominion?
When thus the goddess, answering mild,
First shook her gracious head, and smil'd:

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" Alas! how willing to comply,
" Yet how unfit a judge am I!
" In times of golden date, 'tis true,
" I shar'd the fickle sex with you;
" But from their presence long precluded,
" Or held as one whose form intruded,
" Full fifty annual suns can tell,
" Prudence has bid the sex farewell."

In this dilemma, what to do,
Or who to think of, neither knew;
For both, still bias'd in opinion,
And arrogant of sole dominion,
Were forc'd to hold the case compounded,
Or leave the quarrel where they found it.

When in the nick, a rural fair,
Of inexperienc'd gait and air,
Who ne'er had cross'd the neighb'ring lake,
Nor seen the world beyond a wake;
With cambric coif, and kerchief clean,
Trip'd lightly by them o'er the green.

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'Now, now!' cry'd LOVE'S triumphant child,
And at approaching conquest smil'd;
'If VANITY will once be guided,
'Our diff'rence soon may be decided:
'Behold yon wench, a fit occasion,
'To try your force of gay persuasion.—
'Go you, while I retire aloof,
'Go, put those boasted pow'rs to proof;
'And if your prevalence of art
'Transcends my yet unerring dart,
'I give the fav'rite contest o'er,
'And ne'er will boast my empire more.'

At once, so said and so consented,
And well our goddess seem'd contented,
Nor pausing, made a moment's stand,
But tript, and took the girl in hand.

Meanwhile the GODHEAD, unalarm'd,
As one to each occasion arm'd,
Forth from his quiver cull'd a dart,
That erst had wounded many a heart;

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Then bending, drew it to the head,
The bowstring twang'd, the arrow fled,
And to her secret soul address'd,
Transfix'd the whiteness of her breast.

But here the DAME, whose guardian care
Had to a moment watch'd the fair,
At once her pocket mirror drew,
And held the wonder full in view;
As quickly, rang'd in order bright,
A thousand beauties rush'd to sight,
A world of charms, till now unknown,
A world revealed to her alone;
Enraptur'd stands the love-sick maid,
Suspended o'er the darling shade;
Here only fixes to admire,
And centres every fond desire.

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